

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

---

Tuesday, August 2. 1709.

---

**I**N all the Party-Disputes this Paper has been concern'd about, I have endeavour'd to convince the World, that the peaceable Disposition of the *Dissenters* in *England* has evidenc'd it self in their being ever on the *Defensive*—And this is in nothing more clear, than in the Behaviour of the several Writers on that side, since the Decease of the Paper call'd the **REHEARSAL**. From the first time that Author was call'd in question, I have forbore even the necessary Replies to several Points then in Debate, and some Answers to Things, in which, *at least I thought*, that Author expos'd his Party, and gave manifest Advantage of speaking; but I forbore, because I thought it dishonourable to strike

an Enemy when he was down—I forbore reanimating upon the Party or their Practice, because I would prompt no Man's Misfortunes—nor have any of the unhappy Disputes, that such Authors as he promoted, have been ever brought upon the Stage since.

This is an evident Sign, that the *Dissenters* are not Aggressors to the Party-Feuds that rise up among us—Their Cause is stated fairly by the Laws, their Subjection to the Government is stipulated and assur'd on one hand, and their Protection from the Government is secur'd on the other hand—And they seek nothing, their Fetters are knock'd off, they are easie and quiet, they have but one Chain left upon them,

them, which in its Time, I doubt not, the Church it self will relieve them from — The abhorr'd Bondage of which is both unconstitution-like and unchristian, unjust and unreasonable, brought on by a State-Juggle, continu'd by a Party-Tyranny, and as Liberty revives, will doubtless die of Course — But abating this Exorbitance, to which our Occasional Compliance is our Disaster — The *Dissenters* are perfectly at Ease in their Religious and Civil Rights.

They have therefore no Reason to promote Contention, or disorder Affairs in the Government wherein they live, neither do they attempt it — And any farther than a Party on the other hand will make themselves Aggressors, there will be Strife among us; I think, I may leave it upon that Test.

But I am oblig'd to take Notice, how uneasily some Gentlemen, in another Part of Britain, behave under the same Circumstances, revers'd — When first this Paper began to be re-printed in *Scotland*, I did assure those Gentlemen call'd *Jacobites*, or *Episcopal Dissenters* there, they should find no Uneasiness from me, any farther than I was oblig'd to it by their own Behaviour — And that I am now oblig'd to it, I might make themselves Judges, yet I shall treat them like Gentlemen, that if possible, they may be mov'd to treat others so.

In order to introduce the Case before me the more clearly to the Understanding of the World, it may be needful to give a short Account of the State of Things in *Scotland*, as they relate to the Church, since the late Discourse of Persecution which made so much Noise there.

Upon the late Invasion it is well enough known, and needs no examining into, that the Meetings of the *Dissenters* in *Scotland*, where the Ministers would not agree to take the Oaths to the Government, were order'd by the Government to be shut up — which was at first generally done — And some of the Ministers for refusing to give Security, &c. were put in Prison.

But the Fears of an Invasion lessening, and at last vanishing by the Disorder of the French Affairs, the Magistrates of *Edinburgh*, and the Justices of the Peace, by little and little slackning their Hands, and bearing

with the Inconveniences, the *Episcopal* Ministers, even still without qualifying, began to preach again, at first more privately, at last openly as before; and thus they do now, tho' many of them still decline either taking the Oaths to the Government, or so much as praying for the Queen.

This by the way, is an evident Testimony of two Things. 1. That the Disturbance, they met with before, was purely on the Account of Civil Qualification, not their dissenting from the Establish'd Church. And 2. That the Magistrates and Justices of Peace in *Scotland* have not been forward and eager in the Prosecution of these People, as has been suggested, but have on all Occasions born with and been easie to them, as far as would consist with their Duty to the Laws, and to the Commands of their Sovereign.

Nor will I say, that the *Episcopal* Ministers in general have made any ill Use of this, other than the Opening of their Meetings again; many of them have too much Sense of their own Interest to move the Government, to exert themselves in Execution of the Laws against them; and indeed in all the Disturbance of the Kind that has been made, it is apparent, our People here have made a quite different Use from, and much louder Clamours than have been made by the *Episcopal* Ministers themselves — They have indeed adher'd to their refusing praying for the Queen, or taking the Oaths, and have been more passive in their Sufferings, than we have represented them to be.

Again, the *Presbyterians*, who have been here, so loudly charg'd with Persecution, have been so far from what these People pretend to, that they have not withheld from the most charitable Contribution towards their Subsistence — Nor have the *Episcopal* Clergy been backward to own and acknowledge their Charity — This I have been an Eye-Witness to in *Edinburgh*; I have heard the Gentlemen themselves own it, and have by their own Permission seen the Lists of the Names of the Contributors, to the Necessities of the outed Clergy and their Families, among whom are always seen several



veral eminent profess'd Members of the Presbyterian Church, and most of the Ministers of the very City of Edinburgh, where this Complaint seems to center.

As to the Charity of the Magistrates of Edinburgh, I need give you no farther Confirmation of it, than the following Certificate, sign'd by the Gentlemen themselves, who are Collectors of the said Charity, which I have publish'd, as I have it attest'd by good Hands in Edinburgh; and if any Man question the Truth of the Copy, the Original is left at the Printer of this Paper to convince him.

To the Right Honourable the Lord Provost, the Magistrates and remanent Members of the Town Council of Edinburgh.

**W**HEREAS by the Course of GOD's wise Providences, many Ministers of the Episcopal Perswasion have been oust'd of their Charges and Livings, by Reason whereof several of them are reduc'd to great Want and Necessities, amidst which they must needs have perished, if they had not been supply'd by the charitable Assistance of good People. We do ingenuously acknowledge that the Magistrates of the good Town; and the good Neighbours therein, have expressed great Tenderness and Kindness towards them. And because we hope, they will not weary in so good a Work, since both the Difficulties and Numbers of the Indigent are increas'd through Length of Time. We do again humbly represent their crying Wants to your Honours, in Confidence of your Christian Compassion and Charitable Bounty towards your Pensioners (in whose Name these Presents are sign'd by us the general Receivers of the Charity design'd for them) and shall ever pray for

your Honour's Happiness, and the Prosperity of the good Town.

Sic Scrib.

Charles Littlejohn.

John Wingate.

This is a full Testimony (I think) that the Temper that reigns in the wisest Men of the Parties on either side, is quite different from what is represented to us in the South—And really were it not for wrong Representations and quarrelling Breach-makers on both sides, all our Divisions on both Hands and in both Parts of the Island, would be manag'd with much less Animosity than they are, we should differ with much more Charity and Courtisie, and dispute more like Gentlemen, and more like Christians than we do.

Nor has this Humour of widening our Breaches by Reproach and Misrepresentation, been at all the Advantage of the Episcopal Gentlemen themselves, and I can bear them Witness, that they did not desire these hot Gentlemen to make the Noise they have made, much less in their asking Charity here, to ask it in the Names of the persecuted Ministers suffering under the Cruelty and unjust Rigour of the Presbyterians. I know not indeed, how far such Expressions might move the Charity of some warmer Spirits among us, but I am sure, it clos'd the Hands of the Dissenters and moderate People, who knew that Pretext to be fabulous.

What Use other People in Scotland are now making of this Lenity and Relaxation, I shall be more particular in my next.

## MISCELLANEA.

**I** Have said a great Deal in this Paper about the settling the poor Refugees among us, and many People, I find, begin to think it feasible——Perhaps in Time too our native Aversions may cease or wear out—For let your ill Nature guide you to what you will, Reason will prevail at last; and when Demonstrations convince

you, the Noise and Clamour of the Thing will fall of Course——

But now the Difficulties, that lie in the Way of this Settlement, are all the Debate——And here, Gentlemen, give me Leave to insult you a little, I mean, the busy wise Men I spoke of before, upon my first Proposal of settling them upon Land—